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## New York Latest State to Ban Steroids

by Tom Precious

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New York is joining other states in cracking down on steroid use in horse racing, state regulators announced Oct. 14.

“For the sake of the betting public, we want to do everything in our power to ensure that racing runs on a level playing field,” said John Sabini, chairman of the New York State Racing and Wagering Board, in a statement. “By imposing rigid new limits on four steroids and banning all others, New York is taking a leadership role in promoting integrity in racing. The message to owners and trainers should be clear: If you flaunt our steroid rules, you will be held accountable.”

The new rules go into effect Jan. 1.

Officials were unveiling details about the new effort Oct. 14, but the rules will set new threshold levels for four steroids that are now permitted – and allow only one of those to be permitted in horse racing. The rules affect: stanozolol (Winstrol), one nanogram per

milliliter of urine; boldenone (Equipose), for male horses other than geldings; 15 ng/ml; nandrolone (Durabolin), one ng/ml; and testosterone, 20 ng/ml in geldings and 55 ng/ml in fillies and mares.

The rules – which can be found at the racing agency’s web site, <http://www.racing.state.ny.us/> -- affect all Thoroughbred and Standardbred tracks in the state.

“A prosperous industry is good for the communities that host the tracks as well as for the entire state. That is why Gov. David A. Paterson and I are fully committed to working closely with all the stakeholders involved with racing and taking the steps needed to help this storied “Sport of Kings” grow and build on its base of fans,” Sabini said in a statement.

In an interview, Sabini said the state was pushing to get the rules in place early before next year’s major stakes races. He said there will be penalties to trainers – the agency has a maximum fine of \$5,000 per violation – and suspensions for violation of the rules.

Sabini said the rules will be felt in the industry – by trainers, owners and fans. “The horses will be healthier and people will have more confidence in the product...People want to know that their horses are running on an even playing field and the horses aren’t charged up on drugs,” he said.

The New York Racing Association and Jockey Club endorsed the rules, he said.

“This is where the industry is going,” he added. The rules are modeled on ones backed by the Racing Medication Testing Consortium and the Association of Racing Commissioners International.

“The only drugs that should be allowed in horse racing are those that are therapeutic in nature,” added racing board member Daniel Hogan.

NYRA president Charles Hayward praised the racing board’s move for being consistent with other states. “New York has the best Thoroughbred racing in the country and NYRA will continue to work with chairman Sabini to ensure that we offer the highest integrity and a level playing field for our owners trainers and customers,” Hayward said in an e-mail.

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